

583 expected. The price is set by the corporate group but can
554 vary, and usually does, from one tertiary segment to another.
556 The wealthier tertiary segments tend to have higher bride-
prices. This is explained by the fact that they occupy a
"higher status" on the prestige scale, and also, by the fact
that they wish to carefully control and maintain this status.

[435] For instance, "between cousins" of 'Ailit Ma'fas the
mahr is fixed at 60 Egyptian pounds, but "a man can pay more
out of generosity if he wishes." Hence, a member of the
Ma'fas lineage can increase his prestige within and without
his family by paying beyond that which is expected of him.
In this case, "generosity" is the variable related to a man's
place on the scale of prestige. On the other hand, in another
583 "poorer" lineage, 'Ailit Zagharat, the mahr is 30 L.E. to
554 members of the in-group but "the stranger will pay 60 to 80
556 L.E., according to the father's wealth." The largest and
435 most famous mahr payment in the area was made by the wealthiest
man in al-Qasr who paid seven camels (each worth about 150 L.E.)
for his son's wife. The highest fixed mahr in al-Qasr was
that of Bait Bu Tarram of 'Ailit Lazumi. It was 100 L.E.
for members of 'Ailit Lazumi and, accordingly, much more for
strangers. This mahr is in contrast to the average for the
area which is about 30 L.E. within the secondary group.

586 Divorce is a forbidden topic of conversation in al-Qasr.
• 521 Any talk about one's wife, mother, or sister is considered in-
784 judicious.

657 modern court system may be viewed as a form of appeal, to the tribal
692 justice. One has to be careful, however, in calling such a procedure.
177 an appeal, since the tribal proceedings have no relevance in the court
178 proceedings.

69 The duality is more serious in criminal cases. When an act is de-
681 fined as illegal by both the tribal and modern law, persons committing
177 it come automatically under the jurisdiction of both laws. As long as
such acts remain unknown to the police, the duality of procedures is
not undertaken. This is possible in minor cases of assault or theft or
adultery. But in major cases, such as homicide or serious assault re-
sulting in the serious injury of a tribal member, it is difficult to
keep the news a secret from the authorities. The funeral proceedings
in the former cases and the medical attention needed in the latter cases
are hard to conceal. Besides, serious cases start a whole series of
• [627] mediations and go-betweens which always become the general knowledge
[521] in the entire area and the subject of conversation among the people.

When the authorities know about such cases, they have to take immediate
action to bring the offender to trial, even when the government authori-
ties know that the tribal proceedings are being conducted in the case.
Some attempts are made by both the tribal law and the modern law to mini-
mize the effect of that duality. It is common that when the district
attorney knows that a certain criminal case has been successfully solved
according to the tribal proceedings, to ask for the minimum penalty for
the offense. On the side of the tribal proceedings, once the case has
been solved, the witnesses needed to testify for the prosecutor are in-
structed by their fellow tribesmen to refrain from giving the information

685 refused to see them. Later Hakim had Shei'eb spread the rumor that Qudura
627 had taken a bribe from the Geneishat to refuse to take the oath, and the
578 story of an old dispute between Qudura, on the one hand, and both Hakim
[521] and Shei'eb, on the other. This dispute dates back to the time when the
613 Awqil of the Aggary Amar decided to replace Shei'eb with Hakim as the
156 Aqila of bait Asabei'. Shortly after the decision of the Aggary Awqil
554 was publicly known, Qudura was very unhappy and refused to recognize it.
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His reaction was not out of loyalty to Shei'eb whom he thought was a very unfit person for the position, but it stemmed rather, from a deep resentment of Hakim. According to my information, Qudura's position was not with sympathy by the majority of the people outside the Aggary Amar who share with him the belief that Hakim was a dishonest person who could not be trusted as a representative of bait Asabei'. It was at that time that the stories of Hakim's dishonest dealings were being discussed publicly, mainly by Qudura and members of his camp. At that time many believed that Qudura was the best man for the position of Aqila of bait Asabei' and that he was the only qualified member of that bait. He was the oldest able man in the bait, and although he was poor, yet he was known throughout the area for his honesty and sound decision. In fact many people in the area told me that they believe Qudura to be the only honest member of bait Asabei'. Realizing that Qudura was getting all the attention, Hakim sent his son Rabbu to Qudura with a message that Hakim acknowledged Qudura as the Aqila and that he (Hakim) had neither the time nor the interest in taking the position himself. Hakim also conveyed the view that he would support Qudura if the latter denounced Shei'eb and appointed himself in his place. Qudura agreed and a date

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[196] to Qudura and to tell him that Hakim wanted to show his respect. This means in everyday parlance that Hakim was willing to pay him money. Qudura agreed to meet Hakim the following day.

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[574] On the day of the meeting, to which I was invited, Hakim arrived with his son and gifts of three goats, tea and sugar. One of the goats was slaughtered and supper was prepared for the guests. While the guests were eating, Hakim and Qudura disappeared inside one of the tents for more than an hour. When they finally joined the gathering, Hakim announced that he and Qudura were now brothers and that it was his fault that Qudura was angry because he had accused him of being stupid and misunderstanding the content of the message sent to him after the meeting of the Aggary awawil. "I admit," said Hakim, "that I might have meant at one time and probably said it to sheikh Qudura that I wanted him to be the Aqila of bait Asabei'. Now that I have admitted this, Sheikh Qudura should not have any grudges against me or my son." Then Qudura addressed the gathering and said, in a very cold and dry manner, "I am glad that Hakim has come to this senses and admitted his mistake." The gathering lasted for most of the evening, spent mostly in behind-the-scenes meetings involving Hakim, Qudura and different guests. Then as the last guest left, Shei'eb, who had been inside the tent throughout the evening came out and said that Hakim was a fool and that Qudura had tricked him into admitting publicly that he had lied and that Qudura still refused to take the oath.

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[521] Qudura's stand created a strong reaction which affected almost all the tribal segments in the area. The case overshadowed any other event and was the main topic of discussion. The reaction was mixed, however.

159 the relationship between her and her brothers.

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428 Following her action and until the time of the study, they had
593 never visited her and she had never visited them. Her husband took
[237] care of the herd; and the arrangement worked out all right until the
159 husband told Fatma one day that he was going to marry a second wife.
562 She refused, but he went ahead with the marriage without her consent.
593 He brought the new wife to live with Fatma in the same tin hut in which
595 they were living. He started to pay more attention to the new wife and
to neglect Fatma; whenever the latter complained, he beat her. Then,
before one of the religious feasts, he sold two of Fatma's sheep and
bought his new wife a dress and a silver bracelet. When Fatma objected
[144] and they argued, he hit her with a stick on the head; she was hospital-
ized for a week with a serious head wound. While in the hospital, she
went to her brothers who lived only two miles away, but they refused to
come to her assistance. She then went to sheikh Elewa (the aquila of
159 Bait Asabei) and threw herself on him. He met with the husband and con-
562 vinced him to divorce Fatma. He kept forty sheep of Fatma's herd as com-
593 pensation for the mahr he had paid her and (the marriage expenses, then
595 took his new wife and moved from Fatma's hut. Fatma then returned and
586 managed her financial affairs successfully herself. She managed the
159 store and hired a shepherd to take care of the sheep. At the time of
562 the present study she was respected by almost everybody in the area, in-
444 cluding members of the local administration. She is known to be reason-
[233] able and of sound opinion, and her store functions as the meeting place
[129] for many of the tribal mi'ads and for casual conversations. She is also
[521] considered as a liason between the tribal population in the area and the
local government administration, and is respected by both sides.

Cases

584 Prior to the wedding festivities, the
593 father will have participated in negotiations, although even in these he will have remained silent, leaving an affine, as a rule, to arrange the details with the girl's father and his kinsmen. The father feigns aloofness from the start of negotiations until after the wedding celebrations have ended. Before inquiring into this seemingly odd behaviour, a few further details of marriage ceremonies need to be mentioned briefly.

585 The bride is carried to the nuptial tent on a camel, seated in a cage-like
342 structure placed on the camel's back, this canopy covered over with carpets
[492] and at least one long blanket — later to be used to divide her tent into male and female quarters — which constitute part of the goods given to a woman on marriage. On her arrival, while she is still seated in her canopy, the camel is led round the tent seven times by a small boy. She then descends and is hustled into the tent by a number of women who make a show of their attempts to conceal her from view. Inside the tent the bride is enclosed in one corner in a kind of cubicle partitioned off by a length of blanket.

585 In the meantime, the groom has affected to escape, but is "caught," while
[533] running away, by his fellows, who "compel" him to return to the nuptial tent, to the accompaniment of their lewd songs telling of the sexual pleasures awaiting him. Much of this is horseplay, but the young men carry it out brazenly and the groom is required to show reluctance to continue with the ceremonies. His entry into the nuptial tent is marked by an expectant hush that falls over the crowd of men gathered, as they await the result of the virginity test the groom is about to perform, which he does by wrapping part of his toga round one of his fingers to pierce the hymen. Sharp shrieks from the bride give the signal that the test has been undertaken; not a stir moves the crowd until evidence of its success has been publicly displayed, which is given by the groom hoisting the blood-stained portion of the toga through the corner of the tent on a pole, followed by firing three shots from his rifle. Jubilantly, the men gathered fire volley after volley from their rifles just over the nuptial tent, and the seven-day celebrations begin.

585 A full descriptive account of a marriage, or many of the ritual details
589 woven into it need not be given here. What is included is intended to illustrate certain relationships between father and son, and between one generation and another. In this connection two further points are appropriate. First, during the week of festival, young men gather outside the nuptial tent each night to encourage a maiden in her dancing, clapping their hands to the point of injury "so that we will have a wife soon." The celebrations [533] belong to the bachelors, and they are the only ones to engage in the singing and hand clapping. It is they too who stop the bridal camel on its way to [538] the nuptial tent to recite obscene rhymes to the bride, and they also shout [831] their rather dubious consolations to the bride who, during the virginity test, crying out for her mother, is assured by them that the night holds promise for her which her mother could never extend. The married men, particularly the close senior agnates of the groom, stay away from it all, discussing matters unconnected with the affair.

The Bedouin of Cyrenaica

her father takes, but in certain critical situations he can be relieved of choice if the interests of the group as a whole are at stake.

Political authority is the preserve of a corporation, and its exercise leads to invasion of a man's authority in the field of domestic relations. This does not mean, however, that discrete areas of authority do not remain with the father. In the tent his authority over his son is so overwhelming as to keep the son in almost complete subordination. The son is referred to as a slave, and in daily life he has to behave as one. He must obey every command, for, were he to rebel, he would find little or no support among his agnates, whatever the extent of the provocation. Retreat from his father is hardly an alternative, since, while his father is alive, he has no animals of his own, and to leave camp would only mean that he would have to move outside his group to seek employment elsewhere as a shepherd. If he did this he would forfeit status, and almost certainly cut himself off from property which would fall to him after his father's death. A man who "denies" his father loses too many privileges for the practice to become widespread.

Caught in this dilemma, a son's predicament is worsened by the fact that he cannot initiate marriage negotiations — to be able to do so requires some animals to offer a girl's father. Through his mother's brother he has the means of bringing pressure to bear on his father, but the latter can resist for years. Finally, a marriage is arranged for him. It is difficult to convey the yearning of young Bedouin for marriage. They discuss it among themselves *ad nauseam*. For the most part their talk is about the sexual aspect of marriage. Premarital sex relations are strictly controlled, and the movements of each young girl are carefully guarded because, if on the day of her marriage the test shows that she is not a virgin, she not only brings disgrace to her family, but the marriage may be revoked and her worth as a bride for another man seriously diminished. Nevertheless premarital relations do occur, if not between youths and maidens to any extent, between young men and married women.

The question still remains: why is marriage the occasion of such ebullient celebration? The formal authority a father exercises over his son changes little on marriage. Economically the son is still harnessed to the father. The latter still shouts his orders at him, and obedience remains unaltered. Any sign of an independent view on a matter is met with a gruff rebuff. If the marriage turns out to be disagreeable to the father, he has the authority — if not always the power — to break it. Marriage does not mean a change in the general mode of behaviour between the two; the legal relations remain unaltered, albeit modified in practice, as the married son matures in age. But marriage does mean the acquisition of rights and status previously denied a son. Henceforward, he has a domain of his own. This is high drama, indeed, for although every effort is made to give substance to the expressed view that "nothing has happened," for the first time in his life the son has seized publicly, amid the jubulations of his fellows, a status which hitherto was the possession of the father.